

NEWS RELEASE



OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

San Diego, California

***United States Attorney
Carol C. Lam***

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For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - October 30, 2006

United States Attorney Carol C. Lam announced that Earl John Place was sentenced today in United States District Court in San Diego by United States District Court Judge Napoleon A. Jones, Jr. to serve 60 months in custody following Place's conviction of attempted inducement of a minor to engage in unlawful sexual activity, in violation of 18 United States Code, Section 2422(b). Judge Jones also ordered that Place serve a 5-year term of supervised release following his release from prison and ordered him to have no contact with minors or access to the Internet during his term of supervised release.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Alessandra P. Serano, who prosecuted the case, Place, a United States citizen and Catholic monk living in Mexico City, was arrested by Mexican law enforcement officials and expelled from Mexico by Mexican immigration officials on September 13, 2005, and subsequently transported to the United States where he was taken into federal custody. Place pled guilty to the charges in the indictment on June 26, 2006.

According to court documents, Place came to the attention of Immigration and Customs and Enforcement (ICE) agents in June 2005 during an undercover online investigation of several internet chat

rooms. As part of the investigation, an ICE agent posed as a 13-year-old boy named “Denny.” Denny was contacted by Place, who identified himself as a 61-year-old male United States citizen residing in a monastery in Mexico. As part of his guilty plea, Place admitted that throughout the ensuing months he repeatedly asked “Denny” to participate in cyber sexual conduct with him through the computer, and eventually invited Denny to visit the monastery in Mexico City to engage in sexual conduct. Place even wrote Denny’s “grandmother” a letter on church letterhead inviting Denny to visit Place, using the ruse of studying Mexican history as a justification for the trip. Place was apprehended at the Mexico City airport where he was supposed to meet Denny.

United States Attorney Lam stated, "The use of the Internet by sexual predators seeking to exploit our children is a real and immediate threat to this community."

“This case is a perfect example of why binational cooperation with our law enforcement counterparts worldwide is important,” said ICE Special Agent in Charge, Michael Unzueta. “The Internet does not recognize international borders. ICE is committed to pursuing all investigative leads to the fullest extent."

DEFENDANT

Case Number: 05CR1552-J

EARL JOHN PLACE

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Title 18, United States Code, Section 2422(b) (Attempted Inducement of a Minor to Engage in Unlawful Sexual Activity)

AGENCY

Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Department of Homeland Security